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LETTER DATED 10 MAY 1999 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a communication dated 10 May 1999 which I received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

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Annex

[Original: English]

Letter dated 10 May 1999 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolution 1088 (1996), I attach the monthly report on the operations of the Stabilization Force. I would appreciate your making this report available to the Security Council.

(Signed) Javier SOLANA

Enclosure

[Original: English]

## Monthly report to the Security Council on the operations of the Stabilization Force

1. Over the reporting period (21 March-20 April), there were approximately 31,000 troops deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, with contributions from all North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies and from 17 non-NATO countries.

2. The Stabilization Force (SFOR) continued to conduct surveillance and reconnaissance by means of ground and air patrols, with combat aircraft flying approximately 120 hours. Ground patrols in sensitive areas were intensified, and movements of personnel and vehicles were restricted to a minimum, in response to the continuing political instability in the Republika Srpska and to the NATO air operation in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

3. Over the reporting period, a number of demonstrations against SFOR were organized, primarily in the Republika Srpska. For the most part, these were conducted peacefully, with SFOR monitoring activities on a low-profile basis. However, there were a number of violent incidents, including attacks against diplomatic premises in Banja Luka at the outset of the air operation in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, attacks against United Nations International Police Task Force (IPTF) vehicles and damage to buildings belonging to the Office of the High Representative. There were also a number of isolated incidents of grenade throwing. One civilian injury was reported.

4. SFOR continues to monitor entity compliance with Security Council resolution 1160 (1998), which prohibits the transport of weapons into the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Over the reporting period, and in view of the air operation in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, SFOR stepped up efforts to discover undisclosed weapons caches, and expanded its surveillance of the border area so as to prevent the possible transportation of fuel into the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. To date, no violations of resolution 1160 (1998) have been reported.

5. On 3 April, SFOR closed a portion of the Bar-Belgrade railway line in the vicinity of Rijeka, in the Republika Srpska, approximately 80 kilometres east of Sarajevo. This action was taken in response to information that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia intended in the near future to transport troops and military equipment along this line, in violation of the territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the provisions of the Peace Agreement governing foreign forces. During the operation, one armed civilian was killed after firing on SFOR forces.

Cooperation and compliance by the parties

6. Despite heightened tension, the parties remained substantially compliant over the reporting period with the military aspects of the Peace Agreement.

7. SFOR conducted a total of 919 military weapons storage site inspections: 275 Bosniac; 181 Bosnian Croat; 385 Bosnian Serb; and 78 Federation. No significant discrepancies were reported.

8. On 24 March, a general training and movement ban was imposed on the entity armed forces as a result of the ongoing crisis in Kosovo. In the period up to 24 March, SFOR monitored 122 training and movement activities: 29 Bosniac; 13 Bosnian Croat; 45 Bosnian Serb; and 35 Federation. The training and movement ban on the Republika Srpska Police Anti-Terrorist Brigade remains in effect until further notice.

9. Entity armed forces demining teams continued to conduct counter-mine support operations in order to ensure readiness for the summer demining campaign, which began on 19 April, when 46 teams were deployed. Between 15 March and 18 April, demining teams in Multinational Divisions North and South-East conducted 236 mine-clearing operations, removing 4 anti-tank mines, 43 anti-personnel mines and 16 items of unexploded ordnance from 17,036 square metres of land.

10. The 25th meeting of the Joint Military Commission was held at SFOR headquarters on 25 March 1999. Compliance issues discussed included training and movement activities, demining, and weapons and ammunition site plans. On the political front, discussions focused on the demilitarization of the Brcko district, as required under the terms of the arbitration decision, and the entities were requested to develop an outline agreement for the demilitarization. The professionalization of the entity armed forces was also discussed, together with their support to the process of refugee returns. The next meeting of the Commission is scheduled for 17 June.

Cooperation with international organizations

11. Within capabilities, and in accordance with its mandate, SFOR continues to provide assistance to the international organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including IPTF, the Office of the High Representative, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. During the recent unrest (see above), SFOR provided security and helped evacuate personnel as requested.

12. SFOR continues to provide support to the Office of the High Representative in its efforts to open airfields and to expand civilian air operations. On 24 March 1999, following the initiation of the air operation in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the airspace over Bosnia and Herzegovina was closed to all civilian flights as a precautionary measure, in the interest of aircraft and passenger safety. On 13 April, the airports of Banja Luka, Mostar and Sarajevo were reopened to civil aviation during daylight hours. The airport at Tuzla remains closed.

13. Efforts to establish joint institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina have been hampered recently because of the Bosnian Serb refusal to participate in the wake of the Brcko arbitration decision.

Outlook

14. SFOR will continue to monitor the situation closely in the light of ongoing operations in Serbia and Kosovo. Tensions can be expected to increase as a result of the return of refugees and displaced persons, especially if there is an influx of Kosovar refugees.

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